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ABSTRACT

Educational administration preparation programs increasingly are using cohorts, particularly as a way to teach diversity issues. Cohorts are groups of students who go through a 1- to 2-year study program together. The special characteristics of adult learning, the need for acknowledgement and use of experience, the different learning techniques, the active involvement in learning, and the need for affiliation can all be integrated in cohorts. Gender, ethnicity, and social class are important considerations in creating cohorts. The four most common components of cohort programs are initial development activities, reflective seminars, individual learning opportunities, and long-term involvement. Initial development activities help form bonds and teamwork. Reflective seminars integrate theory and practice and allow students to share insights from their work and other experiences. Personal learning plans can be developed during individual learning opportunities. Finally, many cohorts continue contact with each other long after they have left the program. Cohorts are also a good method for teaching diversity issues. Members of cohorts can learn about each other's different backgrounds and experiences. They can also engage in formal study together on diversity issues. Three diversity subcategories (gender, ethnicity, and social class) should be considered in organizing cohorts and diversity instruction. (Contains 40 references.) (JPT)

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The Use of Cohorts: A Powerful Way for Addressing Issues of Diversity in Preparation Programs*

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The Use of Cohorts: A Powerful Way for Addressing Issues of Diversity in Preparation Programs

In the past decade, there have been persistent attempts to reform professional preparation programs in educational administration. Early reforms tended to address who should be involved in the restructuring of programs and the curricular content (e.g., National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, 1987; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989). Recently, the focus of these reforms has shifted to the instructional delivery system by suggesting that educational administration programs incorporate more active, personalized, and cooperative learning strategies (Murphy, 1990).

This paper expands on these current efforts to restructure the delivery system by examining an increasingly popular organizational structure being utilized in educational administration preparation programs: the use of **cohorts** of students. Typically, a cohort consists of a group of students who enter a program of studies together, completing a series of common learning experiences over a one to two year period. Although advocates of the cohort structure claim this arrangement provides a vital support system for students, few descriptive or empirical studies of cohorts exist (Hill, 1992). To better understand how cohorts operate as well as their potential for dealing with issues of diversity, this paper will:

1. Highlight the variety of ways cohorts are being utilized in educational administration master's degree, certification, and doctoral programs;
2. Describe key instructional components used with cohorts;

3. Examine the characteristics and needs of adults who participate in cohorts; and
4. Explore how issues of diversity and the needs of adult learners can be addressed using these instructional components.

The descriptive information included in the paper is derived from three data sources: (a) the authors' personal experiences working with cohorts in several university settings, (b) observations of cohorts operating at a variety of universities across the country, and (c) informal interviews with university faculty utilizing cohorts. The major components of adult learning theory used to understand the needs of cohort learners include the concepts of adults' need for acknowledgement and use of their experience, the differing ways they go about learning, their desire to be actively involved in the learning process, and their need for affiliation (e.g., Knowles, 1980; Merriam and Caffarella, 1991). Finally, the concepts of gender, ethnicity, and social class are advanced as the key factors to consider when introducing the cohort to issues of diversity.

The Landscape of Cohort Use

Cohorts are becoming an accepted practice in educational administration preparation programs at the master's degree, certification, and doctoral degree levels. To provide a brief overview of cohort usage, cohort selection procedures are examined as well as examples of cohort programs operating at all levels of study.

Selection procedures. Identification of the students who will participate in a cohort can take several forms. Intensive screening procedures are often used to select the final group of students. For example, Butler University faculty conduct extensive interviews with prospective students, ultimately selecting about 25 students. When determining the final group, they strive to create a diverse group based on students' gender, ethnicity, learning style,

amount of experience, and administrative aspiration (elementary, middle, or junior/senior high). Likewise, Brigham Young University program faculty require applicants to attend a day-long assessment session where students engage in a series of simulation activities which are then rated by faculty.

Increasingly, input or sponsorship by local school districts is used as a criterion for selection. District and school officials support cohort programs by identifying potentially strong leaders, releasing students from teaching responsibilities, and locating strong administrative field supervisors or mentors. A strong impetus for district input in the selection and preparation of program participants has resulted from the Danforth Foundation's Program for the Preparation of School Principals (Danforth Foundation, 1987; Gresso, n.d.). Initiated as a way to improve the collaboration between universities and school districts, to allow students to work with accomplished mentors, and to alter the university curriculum, the Foundation has provided grants to over 20 universities since the mid-1980s. Not only have those universities participating in this initiative embraced the cohort concept, but also have created mechanisms for districts to identify program participants (Cordeiro et al., n.d.).

Program options. The Danforth initiative and other administrator preparation reforms have tended to focus on the initial development of school leaders as they participate in master's degree and certification programs. (An exception is the National Policy Board's (1987) recommendations aimed at doctoral programs.) Typically, cohorts in these programs range between 10 and 25 students who remain together for one to two years (Cordiero et al., n.d.). In some cases, the cohort is a separate group of students who only engage in learning activities and coursework with other cohort members. Programs instituted at the University of Washington, Brigham Young University,

Butler University, and Fresno State University, for example, have followed this pattern. In other instances, cohort students take some coursework together, but enroll in additional courses based on personal interests or needs, degree aspirations, or previous graduate coursework completed. In either arrangement, students may need to complete additional degree or certification requirements after the formal cohort program has terminated.

Furthermore, doctoral programs in educational administration are beginning to utilize the cohort structure as a central organizing principle. In many universities, doctoral students might begin their program of studies together; however, no real effort is made to systematically organize the program around a cohort model. Each student is on his/her own to select an advisor and determine a program of studies. Recently, however, doctoral programs are purposely structuring learning activities to foster cohort development. For instance, students in the Dual Major Program at Indiana University satisfy their residency requirement by enrolling in a common core of educational leadership and curriculum and instruction coursework over four consecutive semesters. Upon completing the core, subgroups of the cohort conduct a joint case study, critique other subgroup's case studies, and orally defend their critiques, all of which constitutes their comprehensive examination. Furthermore, at the University of Utah educational administration students enter as a cohort, take common coursework, compile a portfolio of learning activities, and use this portfolio as an assessment device for their comprehensive examination at the end of the second year. Finally, the University of Northern Colorado faculty is fostering cohort development by having students enroll as a cohort in an intensive seminar during their first two semesters on campus where students provide feedback to one another on their written papers, assist each other in achieving personal and

professional goals, conduct a collaborative research project, and form a network of student colleagues who provide mutual support throughout their entire doctoral program.

Besides conducting a cohort doctoral program only during the academic year, some universities are encouraging on campus study during the summer months. Brigham Young University, for example, forms a cohort by admitting groups of four to six students from a similar geographical area. During the summer, these subgroups of students combine into a cohort of approximately 15 students who attend the university, taking a core set of courses. Follow up is provided during the academic year as faculty members hold monthly seminars with each geographical subgroup.

Instructional Delivery Mechanisms

In our examination of cohort programs operating across the country, there are similar organizational structures being utilized or proposed. The fact that these organizational structures and instructional delivery mechanisms are in place suggests that university faculty are beginning to understand and deal with the unique challenges and opportunities afforded by a cohort program (Barnett and Muse, forthcoming). The four most commonly observed and reported components--initial developmental activities, reflective seminars, individual learning opportunities, and long-term involvement--are discussed. To illustrate how these structures are being used, examples will be provided from educational administration master's degree and certification programs.

Initial developmental activities. Faculty and students often espouse that the advantage of a cohort is that a more intimate, safe, and supportive learning environment can be created if the same group of students remains together for a concentrated time period. The assumption is that as students

and faculty get to know and trust one another, they are more willing to share personal insights, frustrations, and aspirations. Such a supportive learning climate may not always develop naturally, but may need to be purposely attended to, especially at the outset of the program. There are several ways in which university faculty begin their programs in order to develop the cohort into a supportive group of individuals.

First, during a concentrated period of study at the university at the beginning of the program, attention is given to creating trust and ownership in the program. For instance, students in the University of Washington's program attend a residential two-week seminar on campus during the summer prior to beginning formal coursework. Besides using this time to introduce the cohort to the underlying themes of the program, students create and share their personal "life maps" which describe who they are, important values and beliefs, and significant life experiences. Journals are kept during the two weeks, and entries are shared among participants. At Brigham Young University, a new cohort begins each summer with students engaging in full-time study for eight hours a day from June through early August. During this time, students take responsibility for certain program functions, such as scheduling social events or making decisions about internship placements for the following fall and spring semesters.

Second, activities are conducted off campus to help develop team building and shared commitment. Each summer, for example, the University of New Mexico's program starts with a one-week residential institute in a remote location where attention is devoted to establishing personal relationships among cohort members. Besides the daily structured learning experiences, students eat meals together, share room assignments, and spend evenings together socially. Team building activities can occur during shorter

periods of time as well. For instance, early in the program at the University of Northern Colorado, students participate in an "adventure ropes" course by engaging in a series of group and individual physical challenges with the support and encouragement of their fellow cohort members.

Third, some programs have expanded the initial developmental activities to include the practitioners who will serve as mentors or field supervisors in the program. Believing that the mentors constitute an important learning opportunity for cohort members, university faculty have structured orientation and learning activities for these mentors early in the program. For example, mentors associated with the University of New Mexico and Brigham Young University programs are provided with some initial orientation and training in the mentoring process and the goals and expectations for the program prior to having students placed with them. Other universities conduct sessions early in the program with cohort members and their mentors to provide opportunities for them to clarify working relationship, program expectations, and learning outcomes. Regardless of the format used in these initial learning experiences, the intent is to assist students in developing a better appreciation for the aspirations, skills, and attitudes of their cohort colleagues, which serves as a foundation for establishing lasting relationships later in the program.

Reflective seminars. A second feature of many cohort programs is the inclusion of a reflective seminar where the integration of theory and practice can be explored (Cordiero et al., n.d.). During these sessions, students have the opportunity to share insights from their field activities, vent frustrations and concerns associated with becoming a school leader, and determine the practical relevance of ideas introduced in formal coursework. Such a seminar becomes what Schon (1987) refers to as a "reflective practicum" where aspiring

professionals are permitted to develop their ability to reflect as they engage in formal preparation for a professional role.

There are a host of learning activities that have been found to encourage aspiring educational leaders to become more reflective about their actions (Barnett and Brill, 1990). Throughout the seminar, cohort students use journal entries, reflective case records, videotapes of their behaviors, critiques of case studies, and critical incident techniques to stimulate topics for discussion and reflection. Structurally, the seminars either are conducted as a separate class session on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis or time is devoted during a regularly scheduled course to engage in reflective activities. When students are involved in a field-based learning experience with a mentor, the reflective seminar can become particularly useful for comparing students' and practicing administrators' responses to emerging administrative problems as well as the similarities and differences in their values and attitudes. Such comparisons allow prospective school administrators to go beyond merely learning important skills and competencies by dealing with their formation as professional educators (Daresh, 1988). As students are permitted to shape the substance and topics of these discussions, they are empowered to be responsible for a portion of the program's curricular content, a highly motivating factor in students' cohort participation (Hill, 1992).

Individual learning opportunities. While the reflective seminars focus on common issues faced by all members of the cohort, faculty also are creating ways for each student to address his/her individual learning needs. One approach to supporting individual needs is to have students develop a personalized learning plan. At the University of Houston and East Tennessee State University students take a battery of self-assessment inventories (e.g., learning styles, leadership styles) to ascertain their personal preferences,

strengths, and areas for growth. Based on this composite information, students identify personal goals to strive for during the program. A somewhat different tack is taken at the University of Northern Colorado where students create an individualized learning plan in which they identify important goals, necessary resources, and methods of assessment. Cohort members share these plans among themselves, making commitments for ways to assist one another in achieving their goals. By encouraging this shared involvement in goal completion, it is anticipated that cohort members will become more committed to one anothers' personal and professional lives, thus building a stronger bond among the group.

Another way to promote individual learning and responsibility is to empower students to choose the other professionals who will support them during their program. For instance, at the University of Washington students are given the freedom to select their own mentors from an established mentor pool. After reviewing written case studies about potential mentors, students are encouraged to visit schools before making their final selections. Students choose a new mentor for each of the three quarters of the program, varying their selections by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and junior/senior high) and location (i.e., urban and suburban). In addition, when students are released for significant periods of time from their classrooms to work with their mentors and take on leadership tasks, providing adequate substitute coverage for the classroom must be resolved. To combat this problem, each administrative intern at the University of New Mexico is responsible for interviewing and selecting a long-term substitute teacher, working closely with this person to ensure a smooth transition for students, and team teaching with him/her each week.

Finally, many students are given the flexibility to jointly determine with their mentors or field supervisors how to meet certain program requirements. In many states, administrator preparation programs must guarantee that mandated competencies or proficiencies be included in the program. Using these proficiency areas as a guide, program faculty encourage students and their mentors/field supervisors to decide how best to work on and document learning experiences that address these areas. Some programs establish their own list of competencies and allow students to determine how best to achieve them. At Butler University, students do not have an assigned field supervisor; however, they must complete 56 competencies during their two years in the program by creating a portfolio of materials and activities that demonstrates their accomplishments and identifying administrators who can verify the successful completion of these competencies.

Long-term involvement. A strong testament to the success of cohort programs is the desire of many students to continue their association with cohort members after the completion of the program (Hill, 1992). The camaraderie and mutual trust that develops is a powerful motivation for continued involvement. The most common approach to dealing with this need is to involve former students in the activities of the current cohort, such as inviting them to special presentations or social events. Some programs encourage periodic reunions of past cohort groups or develop newsletters for updating present and former participants about current university-sponsored events as well as news about the progress of program graduates.

A more sustained response to the long-term needs of cohort members is being considered at Virginia Tech. As each new cohort is formed, students are told the university is making a five-year commitment to them. During the first two years, the cohort engages in university coursework and field-based

learning experiences. Beginning in the third year and continuing for three years, a series of seminars are scheduled so that members of a particular cohort can meet to discuss those issues that are arising as they experience professional challenges in new or continuing roles. Besides allowing cohort members to continue valued relationships, such an extended commitment can help to alleviate the sense of professional isolation felt by many educators, especially newly-appointed school administrators.

Adult Learner Characteristics and Needs

For the cohort experience to be effective, faculty must be cognizant of the characteristics of adult learners, especially their need for the acknowledgement and use of their experiences and prior knowledge, the differing ways they go about learning, and their desire to be actively involved in the learning process versus being passive recipients of knowledge (Brookfield, 1986; Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1980; Merriam and Caffarella, 1991). More recently, drawing primarily from the work related to women and learning, stress has also been placed on allowing the affiliation needs of learners to be addressed as a legitimate and vital component of the learning process in adulthood (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Caffarella, in press; Schneidewind, 1983; Shrewsbury, 1987). In describing each of these characteristics of adult learners, examples of how cohort programs have integrated these characteristics into their program delivery mechanisms are provided.

The role of experience and prior knowledge. The comparatively richer life experiences of the adult have been cited by nearly all writers as a key factor in differentiating adult learning from child learning. Kidd (1973) notes that "adults have **more** experiences, adults have different **kinds** of experiences, and adult experiences are **organized differently**" (p. 46). He goes on to observe that

"these points seem self-evident. An adult's sexual or social experiences are of a kind that mark him off from the world of children. The same can be said of his experiences of a job, or politics, or war" (p. 46). If accumulated life experiences differentiate children from adults, they also differentiate one adult from another. A group of sixty-year-olds will have less in common than a group of twenty-year-olds.

Experience is a major assumption "that can arguably lay claim to be viewed as a 'given' in the literature on adult learning" (Brookfield, 1986, p. 98). Knowles (1980) conceives of this in terms of a "growing reservoir of experiences" that function as "a rich resource for learning" (p. 44). It also establishes a person's self-identity: "Adults derive their self-identity from their experience. They define who they are in terms of the accumulation of their unique sets of experiences." And "because adults define themselves largely by their experiences, they have a deep investment in their value" (p. 50).

Life experiences function in several ways that are idiosyncratic to adult learning. First, as Knowles (1980) observes, adult learners become important resources for learning. Adults can call upon their past learning experiences in the formulation of learning activities, as well as serve as resources for each other during learning events. Activities included in cohort development such as life maps, reflective journals, and critical incidents introduce students' past and current experiences into the curriculum of the program. Second, the need to make sense out of one's life experience is often an incentive for engaging in a learning activity in the first place. This is precisely the intent of the reflective seminars. Third, the actual engagement of past experiences with learning is different for adults than children. They often need to modify, transfer, and re-integrate meanings, values, strategies, and skills (Smith, 1982).

The opportunity for these adjustments are provided as cohort students engage in individual learning activities and process their experiences during reflective seminars. And finally, it should be noted that an adult's past experiences can become obstacles to new learning. Some may have to unlearn negative attitudes toward learning, olds ways of doing things, prejudicial views, and so on.

The differences in the processes of learning. There are fewer dramatic differences in the ways adults go about learning when compared to children. The separation of cognitive factors inherent in learning ability from noncognitive factors that affect learning ability has lead to a better understanding of adult learning. Three noncognitive factors in particular--pacing, meaningfulness, and motivation--have been shown to affect adult learning. Pacing refers to the time a person has to examine a problem or respond to a situation. An adult's ability to respond slows with age, and time limits and pressures have a negative affect on learning performance.

Perhaps because an adult's learning is so closely tied to his or her life situation, adults are not inclined to engage in learning unless it is meaningful. Administrator development programs that encourage individual learning and student ownership in the operating procedures and program content are ensuring that students are engaging in meaningful and relevant tasks. Linked to the meaningfulness of material is the variable of motivation. Kidd (1973) explains that "one of the reasons adults continue to learn well . . . is that they concentrate their learning in the areas of experience in which their interests also lie. Thus their motivation is substantial and, as everyone knows, wanting to learn is the greatest aid to learning" (p. 91). In addition, there are other age-related factors that might affect how adults go about learning such as health problems, fatigue, and use of medications.

As discussed in the previous section, not only is the accumulation of knowledge and experience greater for most adults, but by linking an adult's greater experiential base to learning, a case can be made that cognitive functioning is qualitatively different (Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988; Glaser, 1984). Two ideas are important in the exploration of these differences: the amount of prior knowledge and experience, and its nature. In terms of the amount of knowledge one possesses, there is a key distinction between those who know a great deal about a subject (experts) and those who know very little (novices). It appears that experts not only have a greater storehouse of knowledge but they also think in different ways than novices. According to Glaser (1984): "The knowledge of novices is organized around the literal objects explicitly given in a problem situation. Experts' knowledge, on the other hand, is organized around principles and abstractions that subsume these objectives . . . In addition, the knowledge of experts includes knowledge about the application of what they know" (p. 90).

In further examination of the issue of novice and expert, some authors (e.g., Glaser, 1984; John-Steiner, 1985; Shuell, 1986) have speculated that at least some of the learning processes, rather than being universal, may be specific to certain domains or subject matter--thus making transfer across these domains very difficult, if not impossible, for some people Many graduate students, for example, although very perceptive and advanced in their own fields of study, may have a great deal of trouble completing statistical and advanced research design courses.

In addition to the accumulation and nature of this knowledge and experience, other authors have focused on the transformation of this experience, that is becoming critically aware of converting their prior knowledge and experience into new perspectives. Incorporating activities in

the cohort experience that focus on issues of diversity (as is addressed in the final portion of the paper) is one important way to challenge existing norms, assumptions, and expectation of group members. This transformational process has often been seen as characteristic of adult learning, and for some, the hallmark (Daloz, 1986; Mezirow & Assoc., 1990; Mezirow, 1991).

Finally, it should be noted that those who posit different stages of cognitive development at different ages have indicated that learning processes in adulthood may be different from those in childhood (Arlin, 1984; Riegel, 1973; Labouvie-Vief, 1990; Rybash, Hoyer & Roodin, 1986). Specifically, adults tend to be more reflective and dialectical in their thinking, i.e., they tend to be more tolerant of contradictions and ambiguities, and they engage more often in problem-finding as well as problem solving (Caffarella, 1992). The intense interactions and feelings of trust and camaraderie that characterize cohort relations create a learning climate where problems can be explored safely and productively.

Active Involvement in the Learning Process. Most adults prefer to be actively involved in the learning process versus being primarily passive recipients of knowledge (Brookfield, 1986; Caffarella, in press; Knowles, 1980). This does not mean that instructors give up the role of being information givers, but that their roles need to be expanded to include serving as resource advisors and learning facilitators (Brookfield, 1986; Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990). During reflective seminars and when assisting students in shaping their individual learning plans, professors must take on a facilitative role. In fact, in order to encourage such a role, faculty in the Danforth Program for the Preparation of School Principals are referred to as "facilitators" and are provided with written materials and attend information sessions aimed at supporting them in this role. Acting as resource advisors includes both

assisting students with the process of learning, such as helping students develop their own learning objectives and choose appropriate strategies for going about that learning process, as well as being a content resource. This latter role of content resource person involves sharing materials and experiences from their own store of resources and helping students locate resources that can better be obtained from other sources (e.g., libraries, computerized data banks, people).

The facilitation role, in terms of formal classroom instruction, consists of organizing and serving as the process person for in-class activities that actively involve students as part of the learning process. There are numerous instructional techniques for encouraging active student participation, from large and small group discussion to role plays and use of case studies (Galbraith, 1990). These types of activities are the hallmark of reflective seminar sessions. In choosing which technique to use, certain factors are considered including: (1) the match of the technique to the objectives for the learning experience; (2) whether the content can adequately be addressed through the use of the technique; (3) the background and experiences of the students; and (4) the capability of the instructor to use the chosen technique (Caffarella, 1988).

Having students be active participants in their own learning also demands that students may need to change how they have acted in terms of "the student role." Students can no longer assume that instructors have the only, or even the major responsibility, for teaching them the material, but they too must take responsibility for their own learning. This responsibility can range from giving students almost total control of the learning process through the use of individualized learning techniques (as is routinely done in cohort programs) such as preparing learning contracts; having students give

presentations in class; and/or encouraging active participation in small and large group activities.

Affiliation Needs of Learners. Recognizing the affiliation needs of adult learners, that is the desire for learners to be connected and supportive of each other's learning, is an aspect of the learning process that has received more attention in the practice of teaching adults over the past five years. Addressing the affiliation needs of adult learners is an important aspect of cohort development. Beginning with the initial development activities, particular attention is given to building collegial and personal relations. Moreover, the fact that most programs are striving to meet students' desire for continued contact after the program has ended indicates the depth of personal affiliation cohort programs produce.

Although this practice has been addressed from a variety of perspectives, the most ardent voice of encouragement for the inclusion of the affiliation needs in teaching has come from discussions of women and the learning process (Belenky, et al., 1986; Collard & Stalker, 1991; Hayes, 1989; Schneidewind, 1983; Shrewsbury, 1987). The commonality of thought among these authors in responding to the needs of learners to form relationships that encourage learning are the importance of collaborative inquiry, cooperative communication styles, and a holistic and democratic approach to learning. This collaborative way of knowing, coined by Belenky et al. (1986) as "connected teaching", encourages a cooperative communication style both between the instructor and the participants and between and among the participants themselves.

Collaborative teaching, based on the assumption that learners should be actively involved in the learning process as described above, can be fostered in a number of ways. These include allowing learners to share in setting goals

and objectives for courses and other learning events; giving learners the responsibility for carrying through some of the learning activities; using interactive teaching techniques; and providing opportunities for team presentations and projects. The underlying philosophy of many cohort programs clearly advocates ways for students not only to become more involved in the learning process but also to become empowered and feel ownership in their own professional development. Besides some of the strategies intended to foster collaborative learning highlighted earlier, faculty might use small group discussion, metaphor analysis, story telling, and case study analysis (Caffarella, in press).

Creating a democratic process for learning is similar to the idea of promoting collaboration. Its hallmark is fostering an interactive participatory style with the dual goals of assisting learners to develop independence of thought and action as well as to create mutual or shared objectives (Shrewsbury, 1987). The democratizing of teaching recognizes that power and authority over the teaching process must be shared between instructors and learners in terms of making decisions about the learning experience, as well as fostering a participatory style of learning. Examples of helpful resources for establishing this type of climate and structure for learning include materials by Knowles (1975, 1980) on program planning and learning contracts, Hiemstra and Sisco (1990) on individualizing instruction, Brookfield (1987) on developing critical thinking, and Hiemstra (1991) on creating effective learning environments.

Including Diversity in the Curriculum

Because of the length of time a cohort spends together and the intense interactions that occur, the cohort experience is well suited to address issues of diversity, including gender, ethnicity, and social class differences. Some

cohort programs purposely encourage students to include issues of diversity as part of the curriculum. For example, during the residential institute at the University of Washington, students deal with their own and others' diverse experiences by creating life maps, developing and sharing personal journals, attending sessions on topics such as global education, and reading and discussing articles on diversity. In addition, formal units of study or program themes address diversity in several programs. At Fresno State University and the University of Washington, the curriculum includes units on multiculturalism and its implications for leadership. In these seminars, issues such as understanding equity, recognizing the disparity in the treatment of students from different ethnic groups, and creating schools which embrace diversity are explored.

Outlined in Table 1 are a sampling of instructional techniques that either have been or could be used to address issues of diversity throughout the life of a cohort group. Four major assumptions form the basis for the way the material is presented. First, the diversity issues are divided into three different sub-categories: gender, ethnicity, and social class. Gender is defined as male and female; ethnicity as the predominate racial and/or cultural background of a group of people; and social class in terms of a person's economic, educational, and occupational status. Although these sub-categories of diversity are often intertwined and instructors may wish to address them in a more holistic manner, for the purpose of this paper these sub-categories are seen as constituting differing issues and are important in their own right. Therefore, at some point during the cohort experience each sub-category should be highlighted as a separate and distinct realm.

The second assumption is that issues of diversity should be discussed within each instructional component of cohort groups, from the initial

development activities through the long term development phase. Third, the suggested strategies acknowledge that some cohort groups will be mixed in terms of the gender, ethnicity, and social class background of the participants, whereas others may reflect diversity in only one or two of these areas, and still others may have participants that all have similar backgrounds. Therefore, the background and experiences of the students should shape **how** the instructional techniques are implemented. And finally, the sampling of instructional techniques that have been chosen reflect that participants of these cohorts are adult learners and as such each technique incorporates the importance of using the prior knowledge and experience of the learners, their desire to be active participants in the learning process, and their need for affiliation.

The sample instructional techniques that are highlighted in Table 1 can be interchanged between and among the various issues of diversity. For example, in reviewing the activity of creating personal life maps, it may be more appropriate for the group to use a panel discussion to focus on issues of social class and biographies or autobiographies on issues of ethnicity, versus what is described for each of these issues on the table. In addition, there are numerous other activities that could be used, such as critical incident techniques, classroom observations, and the like (Caffarella, 1988; Galbraith, 1990). The key to incorporating these techniques in addressing issues of diversity is to adapt their use to focus specifically on issues related to gender, ethnicity, and/or social class.

Summary

Learning cohorts in educational administration programs appear to be increasing. As faculty have embraced this instructional delivery mechanism, serious attention has been given to incorporating activities that capitalize on

the adult learning needs of cohort participants. The cohort structure also provides a unique opportunity to address issues of diversity. By presenting materials on topics such as multiculturalism, racism, and equity and by drawing on cohort members' personal experiences and viewpoints about gender, ethnicity, and social class issues, leadership development programs can begin to assist future school leaders in identifying ways to acknowledge and celebrate diversity in their students, teachers, and communities.

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Table 1 - ADDRESSING ISSUES OF DIVERSITY WITH ADULT LEARNERS THROUGH THE USE OF COHORT GROUPS

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES	WAYS TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF DIVERSITY		
	GENDER	ETHNICITY	SOCIAL CLASS
(1). **Initial Developmental Activities** • *Creating personal life maps* - A process where participants describe who they are, important values and beliefs, and significant life experiences.	**For Mixed Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to reflect on what effect their gender has had on their life maps. Participants are then asked to analyze how the maps are similar or different related to the gender of the participants. **For Same Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to interview people of a different gender and ask them to compose a personal life map. These maps are then shared with all participants and the similarities and differences between the maps related to gender are discussed.	**For Ethnically Diverse Cohorts** • Participants are asked to reflect on what effect their ethnic backgrounds have on their life maps. They are then asked to discuss the similarities and differences between/among the maps based on the ethnic identities of the participants. **For Ethnically Similar Cohorts** • A panel of people that represent the predominate ethnic backgrounds of that particular area are asked to share with participants their life maps. This is followed by an interactive discussion among panel members and participants as to how the panel members' life maps are similar and different from the participants.	**For Diverse Social Class Cohorts** • Participants are first asked to explore the concept of social class and how this is determined. They are then requested to describe what social class they and their parents belong to and how this has affected the construction of their life maps. **For Similar Social Class Cohorts** • Participants are asked to read an autobiography or biography of a person whose origins are of a different social class than they are. They are then asked to construct a life map of that person and share it with other participants.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES	GENDER	ETHNICITY	SOCIAL CLASS
(2). Reflective Seminars • *Reflective Journal Writing* - Participants keep journals in which they record specific events, ideas, thoughts and the like; how they feel about these events, ideas, thoughts and the like; and/or how they might feel differently in the future.	**For Mixed Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to reflect in the first third of their journals on what effect their gender has on what they chose to record and how they feel about what they recorded. At predetermined times throughout the seminar, participants are then asked to share and discuss items they have recorded as gender-related and discuss how that might affect their future actions. **For Same Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to "informally interview" colleagues whose gender differs from theirs and ask them how they have reacted to events in their professional lives that in their judgment have been related to the issues of gender. They then record whatever reactions they receive in their journal.	**For Ethnically Diverse Cohorts** • Participants are asked to reflect in the second third of their journals on what effect their ethnic background has on what they chose to record, and how they feel about what they recorded. At predetermined times throughout the seminar, participants are then asked to share and discuss items they have recorded as having an ethnically-related component and brainstorm how that might affect their future actions. **For Ethnically Similar Cohorts** • Participants are asked to read literature or poetry that reflect other ethnic cultures and record in their journals their reactions to this material and how this knowledge might change how they act in the future.	**For Diverse Social Class Cohorts** • Participants are asked to reflect in the last third of their journals on what effect their social class has on what they chose to record and how they feel about what they recorded. At predetermined times throughout the seminar, participants are asked to share and discuss items they have recorded as having a social class related component and discuss how that might affect their future actions. **For Similar Social Class Cohorts** • Participants are asked to interview educational leaders who serve diverse social class populations and have the interviewees reflect on how their actions and strategies as school leaders have or could be different when working with students and parents of differing social classes. Participants then record what they have learned from these interviews in their journals and how this knowledge might change how they act in the future.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES	GENDER	ETHNICITY	SOCIAL CLASS
• *Storytelling* - Participants are asked to tell stories that relate how they feel about a particular event or experience.	**For Mixed Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to share stories in small groups that illustrate experiences they have had that portray gender-related issues. Each group is asked to choose one of these stories to share with the large group and implications for the practice of being a school leader are discussed. **For Same Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to read the stories of authors that reflect gender-related points of view that are not represented in the seminar. These stories may be in the form of biographies, auto - biographies, fiction, or poetry. They are then asked to share highlights of these stories through small and large group discussion and what these stories have to say to their practice as educational leaders.	**For Ethnically Diverse Cohorts** • Participants are asked to share stories in small groups with colleagues who have similar ethnic backgrounds that illustrate experiences they have had that portray events or issues that are ethnically related. Selected stories are then shared with the total group and implications for the practice of being a school leader are discussed. **For Ethnically Similar Cohorts** • Participants are asked to take part in role-plays that illustrate the stories of people from differing ethnic backgrounds. They are then asked to reflect on their reactions to the role-play (as both participants and observers) and what these scenarios have to say about their practice as educa - tional leaders.	**For Diverse Social Class Cohorts** • Participants are asked to share stories in dyads or triads with colleagues from differing social classes that illustrate ex - periences they have had that portray events or issues they believe are related to social class. Each dyad and triad group is asked to choose one of these stories to share with the large group and implications for the practice of being school leaders are discussed. **For Similar Social Class Cohorts** • Participants are asked to talk with a teacher and ask him/her to tell them a story that illustrates social class differences among their students. They are then asked to both share the teacher's reactions to asking them to do this task and the stories they heard.

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SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES	GENDER	ETHNICITY	SOCIAL CLASS
(3). Individual Learning Opportunities	For Mixed Gender Cohorts	For Ethnically Diverse Cohorts	For Diverse Social Class Cohorts
• *Personalized Learning Plans* - A learning plan (or contract) is a formal agreement written by a learner which details what will be learned; how the learning will be accomplished; what will be given as the evidence that the learning activity has been accomplished; the period of time to be involved; and how the learning activity will be evaluated (e.g., criteria and who will evaluate).	• A participant is asked, as part of his/her learning plan, to do a small group interview (three or four people) with other members of his/her cohort group of the opposite gender. The interview topic and how the results of the interview will be evaluated are determined by the learner. For Same Gender Cohorts • A participant is asked, as part of his/her learning plan, to observe a group in which all or the predominate membership in the group are of a different gender than themselves. He/she may choose a group of his/her choice and report on what was found (e.g., via written report, audio tape, development of a case study) in any manner that he/she chooses.	• A participant is asked, as part of his/her learning plan, to choose a learning strategy (e.g., panel discussion, individual/group interviews, observations) that would allow him/her to learn more about participants of the cohort group who have a different ethnic background than his/her own. She/he also chooses how to summarize and evaluate the findings. For Ethnically Similar Cohorts • A participant is asked, as part of his/her learning plan, to choose a learning strategy (e.g., observations, interviews, critical incident techniques, reading, watching a video or a movie) that would allow him/her to learn more about an ethnic group other than her/his own. She/he also chooses how to summarize and evaluate the findings and observations.	• A participant is asked, as part of his/her learning plan, to choose a learning strategy (e.g., panel discussion, focus groups, group discussion) that would allow him/her to learn more about participants of the cohort group who have a different social class background than his/her own. He/she also chooses how to summarize and evaluate the findings. For Similar Social Class Cohorts • A participant is asked, as part of his/her learning plan, to choose a learning strategy (e.g., reading, watching a video or movie, interview, observation, field trip) that would allow him/her to learn more about people from a different social class other than his/her own. She/he also chooses how to summarize and evaluate the findings and observations.

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SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES	GENDER	ETHNICITY	SOCIAL CLASS
(4). Long Term Involvement • *Reflective Case Records* - Participants bring to the group either verbally or in writing a "real-world" problem related to educational leadership that they have encountered in their practice.	**For Mixed Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to bring to the group a leadership problem they have encountered in their organizations related to a gender-related issue. Groups of same gender are asked to discuss this problem and offer at least two alternative solutions. Solutions are then compared for their similarities and differences. **For Same Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to talk with a colleague of the opposite gender and ask him/her to identify a leadership problem he/she has encountered in his/her practice and how he/she solved that problem. They are then asked to share these problems and solutions in small and large groups when the cohort group meets and then discuss whether they would have responded to the situation in the same way and if they believe their response is gender-related.	**For Ethnically Diverse Cohorts** • Participants are asked to bring to the group a leadership problem they have encountered in their organizations related to issues of ethnic diversity. They are then asked in dyads to interview each other about their problem and brainstorm possible solutions. These dyad conversations are then shared with the total group. **For Ethnically Similar Cohorts** • Selected participants are asked to invite three educational leaders to a cohort meeting who represent ethnic backgrounds different than their own. These resource people are asked to highlight two or three problems they have encountered which are related to ethnic diversity and lead a discussion on alternative ways they were and/or could be addressed.	**For Diverse Social Class Cohorts** • Participants are asked to bring to the group a leadership problem they have encountered in their organizations related to the issues of social class. Similar problems are grouped together and these groups of students are asked to lead a panel discussion on their problems and possible solutions. **For Similar Social Class Cohorts** • Selected participants are asked to develop, in cooperation with educational leaders who have experience with students who are from differing social classes, a case that can be discussed by the cohort group at their next session. They are then asked to go back to these leaders and discuss the solutions that were offered by cohort members and get their reaction and feedback, which in turn is discussed at the group' s next cohort meeting.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES	GENDER	ETHNICITY	SOCIAL CLASS
• *Networking* - Forming relationships with other women and men who currently hold or aspire to leadership positions for the purposes of giving and receiving information, providing mutual support, and as a means for career advancement.	**For Mixed Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to reflect on the networks that have resulted from the cohort experience in terms of the kinds of networks they are, or have been involved with; the primary gender of those networks, and how those networks have been helpful to them. **For Same Gender Cohorts** • Participants are asked to reflect on the networks they presently belong to or have belonged to which have been predominately male or female in their composition. They are asked to explore the similarities and differences in these groups in terms of information sharing, giving support, and providing opportunities for career advancement.	**For Ethnically Diverse Cohorts** • Participants are asked at the beginning of the "long term involvement segment" of the cohort to form networks that include people from differing ethnic backgrounds. They are then asked periodically to reflect on how those networks are functioning; what benefits they have received from these networks; and how they might improve these networks. **For Ethnically Similar Cohorts** • Participants are asked to expand their present networks to include people of differing backgrounds than their own or to expand the number of those with differing ethnic backgrounds than are already in their networks. They are then asked to reflect on the change in composition of the members of the network has changed their interactions.	**For Diverse Social Class Cohorts** • Participants are asked to reflect on the networks that have resulted from the cohort experience in terms of what effect, if any, social class backgrounds of the participants have had on those networks. **For Similar Social Class Cohorts** • Participants are asked to have members of their present professional networks examine their own social class affiliations and those of their parents in terms of what they believe and how they practice. They would then, with the permission of their network members, share this with cohort group members.